



PRESS RELEASE

Contact

Adrian Griffin
Senior Policy Analyst
California Postsecondary Education Commission
770 L Street, Suite 1160
Sacramento, California 95814-3396
agriffin@cpec.ca.gov
(916) 322-2299

CPEC Releases University Eligibility Numbers

September 9, 2005 — Sacramento — The California Postsecondary Education Commission on Tuesday, September 6, released its estimates of the percentage of high school graduates who qualified for the state's two public university systems from the class of 2001. The study, conducted at the request of the Legislature, provides supporting data and analysis for the Commission's 2003 eligibility study. The 2001 estimates show that 14.2 percent of California public high school graduates met the entrance requirements of the University of California (UC) while 34.1 percent of graduates met the entrance requirements of the California State University (CSU). The 2003 eligibility rates for UC were 14.4 percent and 28.8 percent for CSU. The state's Master Plan for Higher Education recommends that 12.5 percent of graduating high school seniors should be eligible to attend UC with a recommended figure of 33.3 percent for CSU.

Eligibility rates for UC have steadily increased since the 1996 rate of 11.1 percent. "The SAT II has historically been the biggest factor limiting eligibility for UC," said Adrian Griffin, director of the study. "It seems that more of the students who complete the college preparatory curriculum at high school are also taking the SAT II and qualifying for UC. It also seems that the drop in eligibility at CSU from 2001 to 2003 may be the result of more stringent course requirements for that system," added Griffin.

Eligibility rates for African American and Latino graduates have improved since 1996, but are still well below the rates for Whites and Asians. The UC eligibility rate for African American graduates rose from 2.8 percent in 1996 to 6.2 percent in 2003. The rate for Latinos increased from 3.8 percent to 6.5 percent. In comparison, 31 percent of Asian graduates and 16 percent of White graduates were eligible for UC in 2003. For CSU, the eligibility rates for African Americans and Latinos also increased, showing a similar pattern.

"These gains are welcome, but we have a long way to go before we can say that all California students have a realistic opportunity to attend the state's public universities," said Howard Welinsky, chair of the Commission. "K-12 schools in the state's poorest areas need the resources and information to help students take the course work and tests necessary to qualify for UC and CSU. Without a commitment to fostering access for all students, progress will remain painfully slow."

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In the next few months, the Commission plans to look at the factors that affect the way that university eligibility varies from school to school. This analysis will help the Commission develop initiatives to address the low university-going rates at schools in the state's poorest areas.

The study report can be viewed and downloaded from:
www.cpec.ca.gov/completereports/2005reports/05-09.pdf

The 16-page report contains more information on the study and tables and graphics showing trends in university eligibility.

The California Postsecondary Education Commission advises the Governor and Legislature on higher education policy and fiscal issues. Its primary focus is to ensure that the state's educational resources are used effectively to provide Californians with postsecondary education opportunities. More information about the Commission and its work can be found at its website at www.cpec.ca.gov.

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